

Rancher, Farmer and Developer



Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo
Courtesy of California State Library



Pio Pico



Pico on balcony of adobe house



Andres Pico

Pio Pico returned to California, settling in Los Angeles on May 17, 1848. He was one of the few Mexican landowners to retain all of his property after California became part of the United States. In 1853, Pico served one term on the Los Angeles city council but then focused his attention on his business interests. Other Mexican Americans such as Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo also served in local or state government immediately after statehood but by the late 19th century most Latinos were not running for public office.

By 1855, Pico and his brother Andrés held title to 532,000 acres of land. Pio Pico's business experienced the typical cycle of growth and decline over the next 37 years. A combination of poor business investments and legal problems led to his downfall. Once one of the richest men in California, Pico was evicted from his home with only a few possessions. Pico built a hotel, The Pico House, in 1870. It was one of the finest hotels in the Southwest and stands today as a reminder of Pico's impact on the economic development of Southern California.



Pico House